



ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

Environmental Health & Engineering

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 1, 2019

FROM: Youth Outreach Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA), DEHE

SUBJECT: Trip Report – Meetings with YKHC and AVCP-RHA in Bethel – Community meeting and council meetings in Newtok – March 11-13, 2019

TO: FOR THE RECORD

OBJECTIVE:

- Meet with Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) to discuss their clinic space requirements and potential buildings in Mertarvik which could serve as the temporary clinic
- Meet with Association of Village Council Presidents Regional Housing Authority (AVCP-RHA) to discuss the healthy homes move-in manual for Mertarvik residents moving in the AVCP-RHA homes

ATTENDEES:

- Gavin Dixon, Community Development Manager ANTHC DEHE
- Elizabeth (Liz) Wulbrecht, Youth Outreach VISTA, ANTHC DEHE

FINDINGS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On Monday, March 11, 2019, Gavin and Liz flew via Alaska Airlines to Bethel, arriving at approximately 20:30. That evening, they spent the night at the Bethel Long House Hotel. On Tuesday, March 12, 2019, Gavin and Liz arrived at the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) at 8:30 for a meeting with the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) director Asela Calhoun, Interim CIO Lukas Vanasse, CHAP field supervision coordinator Katherine Evon, Kristopher Blake, and Director of Environmental Health and Engineering Brian Lefferts, to discuss clinic design criteria for Mertarvik. Asela and her team determined the minimum space and equipment requirements to provide healthcare in Mertarvik and the meeting was to discuss potential spaces in the new village that could accommodate YKHC's needs.

YKHC requests a 720 sq. ft. facility with an exam room, urgent care room, office, lobby, lab/pharmacy, and bathroom. An office space is required for medical records as records must be double locked. The lab/pharmacy also has specific locking requirements. They also shared with us the required equipment to furnish these different rooms.

Gavin and Liz reviewed three options for a temporary Mertarvik clinic: retrofitting an unused classroom in the Mertarvik Evacuation Center (MEC), using the existing construction camp mess hall, and building out one of the old 2x4 IRT camp bunkhouses. The MEC, as a shared space with the school, was determined to be less than ideal. Next year, not all the space planned for

classrooms will be in use. One of these classrooms could be retrofitted to serve the clinic, as it has a private entrance, ramp and access to a bathroom. The room is 442 sq. ft. with a 50 sq. ft. entry. The room can only serve as the clinic temporarily, however, as it will be used as a classroom in 2020. Lower Yukon Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) would need to agree that this space could be used as the clinic, and for privacy and health purposes, it is not ideal that the school and clinic share the same building.

It was determined that the Newtok Village Council (NVC) construction camp would be the best option to house the temporary clinic. This building could serve as a dedicated space and would not be shared or used for another purpose except storage. While the bathrooms for the space can only be accessed by exiting the building, if this presents an issue, construction solutions can be considered, such as building a covered walkway. The main area is 1500 sq. ft. and the separate pantry area is 400 sq. ft.

The last option, the Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) 2x4 stand-alone bunkhouse, was determined to be the worst. Without access to a bathroom, it would take more money to retrofit than the two options above. With some improvements, however, this structure could serve as the temporary store which was originally planned for the NVC construction camp.

Following this discussion, Liz and Gavin drove to Association of Village Council Presidents Regional Housing Authority (AVCP-RHA), arriving at approximately 9:30 to go over questions for creating the healthy homes move-in manual for Mertarvik residents. Gavin and Liz opened the meeting by giving an update on the relocation, AVCP-RHA's past and present involvement, and the potential for more construction in the future. AVCP-RHA employees present at the meeting were Development Planner Walter Jim, also on YKHC's board of directors and Carl McIntyre, Project Manager. Liz and Carl discussed the resources that AVCP-RHA provides to new homeowners, including information on the home's systems and maintenance. Liz showed Carl the resources she created for new Mertarvik home owners and they discussed gaps in the information and areas for improvement. Liz asked quite a few questions on how ventilation works in the AVCP-RHA homes.

Liz and Gavin met with AVCP-RHA until 11:30 and then drove to Grant Airlines for the 12:30 plane to Newtok. Gavin and Liz waited at Grant until 16:00 when the flight to Newtok was finally canceled. There, they met up with Patrick Lemay, of Lemay Engineering, who was traveling to Newtok for paperwork regarding the community's FEMA home buyout. Gavin and Liz spent the night at the Long House Hotel again.

At approximately 9:15 on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, Gavin, Liz, and Patrick flew via Grant Airlines to Newtok arriving at 10:00. At 10:30, Liz, Patrick, Gavin and Newtok community council members Paul Charles, George Carl, Bosco Carl, and Simeon Fairbanks, as well as Tribal Administrator Andrew John and relocation coordinator Romy Cadiente convened in the brown building for a council meeting. Gavin started by explaining the agenda of the council meeting: to answer question about the recent relocation effort, discuss the recent housing memo regarding occupancy in Mertarvik during the 2019 construction season, recent building designs,

fixing and selling of the NVC's heavy equipment fleet, where to locate the pioneering health clinic and store, and review of the guidebook.

Newtok residents Albertina, Monica, Theresa, Peter and a few other homeowners came to the meeting to discuss the FEMA buyout. For the buyout, homes must be bought and demolished by a specific date this summer before home construction in Mertarvik is finished. Residents were concerned about getting temporary housing before moving to Mertarvik in the fall. They wanted to know where they and their families would live and where freezers and personal belongings would be stored. Patrick Lemay, who is managing the buyout project for Newtok, noted that personal belongings will most likely be stored in a Connex in Newtok or Mertarvik.

George, NVC council member and owner of a FEMA buyout home, asked why the seven houses to be demolished have different values. He was concerned about why some of the houses were worth more money. Patrick explained that the houses were appraised by a state certified appraiser. Following this discussion, housing options for displaced people due to the FEMA buyout were considered.

After Patrick finished his discussion on the buyout, Gavin went into detail regarding the impacts to the relocation if people occupy Mertarvik during the summer construction season. He went over the housing memo sent to the council before the meeting. The details to safety and productivity were discussed and the cost impacts to the project. Gavin also reviewed the construction schedule with mobilization starting in Mertarvik in mid-April and the UIC hiring fair for summer construction, also occurring in mid-April.

At 13:00 the council adjourned and took a break until 14:00. From 14:00 to 16:20, Patrick and Newtok residents signed the paperwork for the FEMA buyout. At 16:30, the council reconvened to review the Powerpoint to present at the evening's community meeting. This review meeting finished at 17:30, and the community meeting began at 19:00. Gavin presented on the entire relocation effort, construction schedules, designs, and funding, and Liz presented on the guidebook. Everything was translated into Yup'ik and the meeting ended at 21:30. Community members were able to ask questions about the relocation and a few elders spoke in Yup'ik after the presentation was finished.

On Wednesday, March 14, 2019, Liz and Gavin reconvened with the council at 8:30 to discuss topics that were not addressed the day before, including clinic and store space, heavy equipment, and moving logistics planning. The three spaces discussed with YKHC at the Tuesday meeting were proposed and the council agreed that any of these structures could be retrofitted and leased to serve as the clinic. If the clinic was established in the NVC construction camp, the Newtok Native Corporation (NNC) store tentatively planned for this space would have to be put elsewhere. Bosco Carl, NVC's secretary, suggested the store be built in one of the old IRT bunkhouses instead. Lisa Charles, NVC's accountant, who also works for the NNC, agreed that this would be possible. NVC and NNC need to plan a meeting to discuss the matter as well as the leasing agreement to be established. Gavin brought up that the NNC would need to fly in materials for the store and that YKHC would need to fly in clinic materials. He suggested that

that NVC, NNC, LKSD, and YKHC coordinate a regular charter once or twice a week since there will not be regular seat fare until 2021 in Mertarvik.

Following discussion of the clinic and store, the council, Liz, and Gavin reviewed the NVC's heavy equipment fleet, broken pieces, and the rental agreement with Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation Construction (UICC) for the 2019 construction season. The Bobcat, D8, and construction trucks in the NVC fleet require repairs. Brice is sending a trained line borer to Mertarvik this summer and UICC suggested hiring him to fix the Bobcat, with repairs totaling around \$3,000. The trucks need new tires and with freight and shipping costs, this would total around \$6,000. The most expensive item to fix is the D8, which needs a new undercarriage. UICC, since they are renting the NVC equipment, suggested assuming the repairs themselves, and at the end of the construction season either paying or charging NVC the difference after subtracting leasing costs. UICC and ANTHC also recommend that NVC sells their D8 and purchases a D6, an F-250 truck, side-by-sides for community use, and a snow blade attachment to clear the runway in the winter.

Later in the morning, Liz discussed the fall moving plan for individuals in the community. NVC wants to help residents relocate by lending their ATVs, trailers and landing craft, which they need to fix first, and hiring a moving crew. ANTHC also recommends that the NVC purchase around 100 totes to lend to community members. The NVC needs to determine how they are going to pay for totes and for hiring a moving crew.

More importantly, the NVC needs to identify who is moving to Mertarvik this fall, which they have yet to do. An application and scoring rubric was created with the help of ANTHC and the NVC's attorney, and the NVC expects to start distributing this application to residents. Once the residents moving are identified, YKHC can determine if a CHAP is relocating and if they need to hire a new CHAP for Mertarvik or Newtok. LKSD can determine the age range of students for whom they need to plan curriculum, how many teachers they need to hire, and if any teachers, aides, and/or administrators are moving over from Newtok. The NVC can determine which Village Police Officer (VPO), council members, and other key positions in the community are moving over.

Other logistics and planning topics discussed were the provision of water, trash, fuel, and electric services in Mertarvik. Electricity will be provided via prepaid AMPY meters on the home, but Liz inquired whether the council wanted to charge for water and trash services. They had not had any previous substantial discussion on these issues. Liz also asked whether NNC or NVC wanted to pay for fuel and then sell it in the community. Bosco Carl recommended the NVC be in charge of fuel for the duration of the relocation construction effort. If this were to be the case, the NVC would need to determine how much they would charge community members for fuel and what hours they would prefer for the fuel dispenser, which needs to be turned on and off daily. This meeting ended around 11:45.

At 12:15, NVC council member Simeon Fairbanks drove Gavin over to Mertarvik on his snow machine. There Gavin went into one of the older Structural Insulated Panel (SIP) homes to take measurements and pictures for the installation of the Portable Alternative Sanitation System

(PASS). The floor plans for these homes are missing and PASS engineers wanted information on the bathroom dimensions, water storage tank, existing venting, electricity, foundation, and gutter system. Gavin was able to take these pictures and arrived back in the community around 14:00.

At approximately 18:00, Gavin and Liz flew from Newtok to Bethel via Grant Airlines. They took the 9:25 flight from Bethel via Alaska Airlines, arriving in Anchorage at approximately 22:30.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

- ANTHC follow up with YKHC on potential spaces for the clinic in Mertarvik with designs of the NVC man-camp and MEC.
- Follow up with NVC on whether they have talked to NNC about the new space proposed for the store and whether they have established a leasing agreement.
- Liz Wulbrecht coordinate with NVC, NNC, LKSD, and YKHC a regular charter once or twice a week in Mertarvik since there will not be regular seat fare.
- NVC authorized UIC to assume role of fixing NVC equipment fleet. Add amendment to lease agreement with NVC that at the end of the season, UIC either pays or charges NVC for repairs minus the costs for renting equipment.
- UIC and ANTHC recommends that NVC sells their D8 and purchases a D6, F250 truck, side-by-sides for community use, and snow blade attachment. A decision by the NVC to proceed with these fleet management decisions will be made once additional input on pricing for sale and acquisition for equipment has been completed.
- ANTHC follow up with NVC on specs for bulk fuel dispenser, whether NVC is going to be in charge of buying for the community, how much they will charge, and preferred operating hours for the dispenser.
- ANTHC help NVC coordinate the distribution of the Mertarvik housing application and its scoring.


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